

BUOYS IN ST. JOHN'S RIVER, FLORIDA.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 513.]

JUNE 24, 1842.

Mr. RAYNER, from the Committee on Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT :

*The Committee on Commerce, to which were referred the resolutions instructing said committee to inquire into the expediency of making appropriations for the improvement of bars, harbors, and rivers, and the placing additional buoys on the bar of the Territory of Florida, report :*

That, so far as regards the placing two additional buoys on the bar at the mouth of the St. John's river, the committee believe it to be necessary. In a report made by the acting quartermaster general to the Secretary of War, dated February 6, 1838, it is stated that, during the then past season, several vessels, loaded with supplies for the army, were wrecked on the bar of the St. John's, partly, no doubt, for want of buoys, and that the public steamer which plied between Charleston and the principal depot on the St. John's had lately been seriously injured by striking on the bar; that, therefore, there could be no doubt of the expediency of establishing buoys at that place, as well to facilitate the military operations in Florida as for the benefit of commerce in general.

In transmitting this report to the chairman of the Committee on Commerce, February 9, 1838, the Secretary of War (Mr. Poinsett) says: "The sum of \$1,000 was appropriated for this object during the 2d session of the 24th Congress, but, as this amount has been found inadequate by the collector, it seems necessary that a larger sum should be provided."

In another letter written by the Secretary of War (Mr. Poinsett) to Mr. F. O. J. Smith, chairman of the Committee on Commerce, dated 17th February, 1838, he says: "My communication to you of the 9th inst. had reference to the inadequacy of the appropriation for the number of buoys which actual experience has demonstrated to be absolutely necessary, and not for the number which had been fixed upon by the individuals appointed by the Navy Commissioners to ascertain that fact. The lowest offer that has been received for procuring and laying the buoys recommended by those individuals is \$1,350, and, as it is confidently believed that two additional buoys are absolutely necessary, which will require at least \$500 to procure and lay them, I would respectfully recommend an additional appropriation of \$850."

From the foregoing statements, on which the committee rely, they are of opinion that, although the Florida war may be nearly at an end, and that, therefore, these buoys may not be necessary for the safety of our vessels acting in concert with the army there, yet these additional buoys must be necessary for the commerce of that region ; and therefore report the accompanying bill.